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## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **BAKERSFIELD COUPLE CHARGED WITH INTERFERING WITH POLICE HELICOPTER WITH HAND-HELD LASER**

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FRESNO – United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge Drew S. Parenti, and Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood announced the arrests on Friday, December 14, of JARED JAMES DOOLEY, 25, and his girlfriend, KENDRA CHRISTINE SNOW, 25, both of Bakersfield, California, on a federal criminal complaint which charges them with interfering with the safe operation of a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter by shining a hand-held laser into the cockpit.

The case is the product of a joint investigation conducted by the Bakersfield JTTF, comprised of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Kern County Sheriff's Department, and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

According to the federal criminal complaint filed on December 13, on November 8, 2007, at about 10:55 p.m., a green laser beam illuminated the cockpit of a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter, which was flying at 500 feet above ground level during routine patrol in Bakersfield, California. When the light hit the cockpit, it disoriented the Kern County Sheriff's pilot, causing pain and discomfort in his eyes for a couple of hours. Lasers, an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation, pose a safety hazard to flight operations. The focused beams of a laser light remain powerful at extended viewing distances and can expose pilots to radiation levels above those considered to be flight safe. Brief exposure to even a relatively low-powered laser beam can cause discomfort and temporary visual impairments, such as glare, flash blind, and afterimages.

The pilot and a tactical observer were able to pinpoint the origin of the laser beam at DOOLEY's Bakersfield residence, where SNOW occasionally stayed. On November 27, task force members executed a federal search warrant, locating a hand-held green laser device in DOOLEY's pickup truck and a red laser device in his home. Both DOOLEY and SNOW later admitted they had used the green laser device on the night of the incident. SNOW told investigating agents that she and DOOLEY were standing in the driveway on November 8 and "taking turns shining the laser around watching the tracers in the sky." They also indicated they had purchased the green laser device from a Radio Shack store sometime in October; the FBI confirmed that Radio Shack sells an identical laser device, which retails for approximately \$50 and has warning labels printed on the device and the instruction guide.

According to a 2005 Congressional research report, a rash of incidents involving lasers aimed at aircraft cockpits has raised concerns over the potential threat to aviation safety and security. United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott stated, "We take the alleged actions of Mr. Dooley and Ms. Snow very seriously. They acted recklessly and with zero regard for the safety of the Sheriff's helicopter pilot."

Resident Agent in Charge of the FBI Bakersfield Office David Gelios added, "The arrests in this case should be considered a warning to the public that the use of commercially available lasers to target aircraft is illegal and represents a danger to flight crews and, potentially, the public from an accident that could occur if a flight crew is impaired in its ability to safely operate its aircraft. Many lasers are over 10 times more powerful than the typical red laser pointers used in the classroom or workplace and can cause significant damage to the eyes. Anyone with information regarding the use of lasers in such a manner should contact the FBI." The number for the Bakersfield Office of the FBI is (661) 323- 9665.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, DOOLEY and SNOW face a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a \$250,000 fine, if convicted. They are both scheduled to appear for an initial appearance at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, December 17 in federal court in Bakersfield before United States Magistrate Judge Theresa A. Goldner, who authorized the complaint and search warrant.

The charges in the criminal complaint are only allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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